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Bellary, even the registers and every other thing should be maintained in the vernacular. We are all agreed that this should be done so far as it is possible. But that we should on this occasion take the opportunity to request the Government and ask them to interfere with the ordinary work of local bodies and issue directions to them to do this thing or that thing is, I think, very wrong. For these reasons I suggest that we should, that is, those who are connected with the local bodies should, as far as possible, encourage the conduct of proceedings and maintenance of records and registers in the vernaculars. We accept the principle, but we should not make a recommendation to the Government asking them to interfere with the conduct of affairs in the local bodies. Therefore I would request the hon. Mover to withdraw his resolution."

Mr. B. VENKATARATNAM (in Telugu):—"The Government order regarding the conduct of proceedings in the vernaculars has been read to us. The difficulty comes in the case of correspondence between the Government and the local bodies. The non-English knowing presidents of local bodies have to obtain translations of English correspondence into the vernacular, and the clerks will again have to translate the vernacular replies of the presidents into English. I think that is the meaning of the 'arrangements' said to have been made already by Government. If the Government make arrangements to conduct the proceedings, etc., in the vernacular only, that would be better."

Mr. K. RAGHUCHANDRA BALLAL (in Kanarese):—"I request permission to withdraw my resolution, Sir."

The resolution was by leave withdrawn.

The House then (1-25 p.m.) adjourned for lunch.

After Lunch (2-30 p.m.)

SUPPLY OF MANURE LEAVES TO RYOTS.

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move:

'That this Council recommends to the Government that manure leaves be given free to the ryots from the reserves under the management of village forest panchayats and from the other forests at a seigniorage of six annas per cart-load.'

*"As I understand, Sir, there is to be an amendment to this resolution I shall be brief in my remarks. Mr. President, Sir, in a province where full 80 per cent of the people are helplessly dependent upon agriculture the resolution for which I am responsible does not require any lengthy speech from me to commend itself to the acceptance of this House. Sir, if agriculture is the one staple industry of the country, it goes without saying that next only to irrigation water in importance is manure and it is common knowledge that of the very large variety of manures available to the ryot green manure comes in as the most handy, the most useful and the most indispensable from the ryot's point of view. Moreover, Sir, for ages past the Indian ryot has counted upon the adequate and free supply of green manure leaves as a right to which he is entitled from the Sirkar. Even in

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- (b) who the delinquents are so far as present investigations go ;
- (c) what are all the steps taken to book the offenders and to recover the sums misappropriated ;
- (d) whether investigation is complete in all the cases and if not, the cases still pending investigation ;
- (e) who was in charge of the investigation and who is in charge now, whether it is departmental officers or the police ;
- (f) what is the amount embezzled in each case and what is the amount recovered in each case and whether the balance is irrecoverable ; and
- (g) whether any of the persons were put before the criminal courts and with what result ?

A.—The question does not state the year or years in respect of which the particulars are required. The attention of the hon. Member is however invited to the following paragraphs in the consolidated audit reports of municipalities and local boards for the years 1921-22, 1922-23 and 1923-24 :—

- (1) Paragraph 11 in Part I and paragraph 4 in Part II of the report for 1921-22 recorded in G.O. No. 487, Finance, dated 31st May 1923, which has been placed on the Editors' Table.
- (2) Paragraphs 37 to 39 and 62 and 63 of the report for 1922-23 recorded in G.O. No. 2769, L. & M., dated the 4th October 1924 (placed on the Editors' Table).
- (3) Paragraphs 35 and 73 of the report for 1923-24 (extracts appended).

Such particulars of the defalcations as are worth mentioning are furnished in the paragraphs referred to above.

Complete information in each case on all the points referred to in the question is not available.

Village roads in the Tirukkoyilur taluk.

150 Q.—Mr. M. RATNASWAMI: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

- (a) whether any new village roads have been built in the Tirukkoyilur taluk of the South Arcot district in the year 1924-25 ;
- (b) whether any petitions have been received by the district authorities from certain Christian villages of Eraiyur in the Tirukkoyilur taluk of the South Arcot district in October of last year for the building of a road in their neighbourhood ; and
- (c) what action the district authorities have taken in the matter ?

A.—The Government have no information.

District Retrenchment Committee for Bellary.

151 Q.—Mr. P. SIVA RAO: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Government appointed a District Retrenchment Committee for the district of Bellary to consider the financial position of the 'local boards' in the district ;

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Government think would be beneficial to him as well as to the Forest Department. It is also said that the cutting of the forests makes the forests deteriorate. But if the common knowledge of the ryot counts for anything, the ryots believe, and I think they believe rightly, that the forests have deteriorated during the last six or seven years during which this restriction has been working. Then, again, there is the stock argument that there are not enough men in the department to watch the forests. I would rather ask the House not to believe it at once. Is it argued that during the last six or seven years the personnel of the Forest Department has undergone considerable diminution? But we have not been asked to vote anything less for the Forest Department. With its large and increasing army of watchers, guards and rangers, if the Government cannot teach the ryot prudence and moderation, then why should we vote the money for that department? We can as well abolish the department. Then, as regards the denudation and the deterioration, I believe it is common knowledge that the periodical clearing of undergrowth, shrubs and creepers which keep down and prevent the healthy growth of more useful plants and which afford shelter to wild beasts and boars which endanger the lives and crops of the ryots, helps the growth of the forest.

“Except this, I do not find any other advantage in allowing the forest to
2-45 p.m. grow in its primeval condition without any periodical cutting away of unnecessary growth. Sir, moreover, it is common knowledge that such periodical cutting away of all rank vegetation promotes the better growth of forests. Being alive to the conditions in my district of North Arcot where with the river Palar getting drier every year and the irrigation sources getting silted up and neglected for years—I may add, in some cases for 25 years, for 30 years and for 50 years and in one case for 70 years—I think the only chance for the ryot is to get a supply of manure leaves at a very cheap cost. I fight for these manure leaves for this reason. Because, very recently, instances have come to my notice of the officers of the Agricultural Department going about on tours and asking the ryot to use the manures prepared and sold by a particular European firm of manure manufacturers in Southern India. I would ask those over-zealous officers whether our ryots are in a position to use these expensive manures, some of which may suit or may not suit particular crops, and whether we can make it more and more difficult for our ryots to use the one handy manure to which they are quite accustomed and which suits every crop and every land. I may also tell the Government that the time has come when they should not treat the ryots with the scant courtesy with which they have been treated all along. Sir, the conscience of the people has been awakened, and already murmurs of discontent are heard in the villages, that the highly paid officers of the Agricultural Department are there to prevent the ryots from having their adequate supplies of manure leaves so that the products of those European firms may be sold more and more. Already this murmur is heard. It is the duty of Government to see that no chance is given for such a belief to gain ground. Sir, as I said already, at the rate at which the Government sell their forest manure, namely, Rs. 2 per cart load, the ryot cannot afford to purchase it. For, for quarter of an acre he requires at least two cart loads and what with carting and removing them, he will have to spend about Rs. 12 on the whole, and we can understand how he can afford to make an outlay of Rs. 12 on manure alone.”

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The hon Sir ARTHUR KNAPP:—"On an acre?"

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR:—"One quarter of an acre, Sir. That is my calculation. Sir, this problem, while it affects the cultivators in the whole of Southern India without exception, affects more seriously in the case of Salem and North Arcot districts—as I said already and I crave the indulgence of the House for repeating it—where this hampering process has taken place recently to a very alarming extent. I recently visited some villages where I found that a major portion of the population has left the village, and everybody knows that all the cheap labour for the Kolar Gold Fields is recruited from North Arcot. And for this reason, Sir, I appeal to the Government that when they have got the right of periodically raising the assessment they should see that the ryot has got some life left in him to pay the periodical Government assessment. Sir, it is a matter on which I should like to dwell at very great length. I am sure every one in this House will endorse the lines on which I have attempted to speak to-day on behalf of the poor ryot and I hope to have the support of all parts of this House in commending this resolution to the indulgent ears of the Government."

Diwan Bahadur W. VIJAYARAGHAVA MUDALIYAR:—"I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution of my hon. Friend, Mr. Adinarayana Chettiyar. I think I need hardly add anything more to what he said, yet I may perhaps make a few remarks. In the first place, I must add my testimony to the statement that he made that there are one or two grievances in the country against the forest policy of the Government, that the forest policy does not seem to be consistent and continuous. The policy of allowing green manure to be removed has been subject to much change from time to time and it does not seem to be evolved in the interests of either the ryots or the condition of the forests. Sometimes, green manure is allowed to be removed by the ryot on payment of some money and at other times it is completely stopped; and while the residents of a village in a certain district are allowed to take green manure from the forest, in the very neighbouring district the thing is completely prohibited. In the same district sometimes the ryots are allowed to take green manure and at other times they are not allowed. These changes do not seem to be necessitated either on account of the growth of forests or on account of the seasonal conditions prevailing in the district. When the forests are full of green leaves the ryots are not allowed to take them, but they are allowed to stand on the trees and wither away. I think also the question of denudation of forests does not arise because allowing people to take the green leaves cannot denude the forest. But the forest will be denuded only if the timber is cut away; and if the officers of the department are there to take care that the timber is not cut away by the people who are allowed to remove the leaves, there is no fear."

"My hon. Friend the Mover said that the forest menials might be abolished rather than have so much trouble and the forests may be administered by the ryot. I think, Sir, that will be a very good alternative. For, even if the rules prohibit green manure being allowed to be taken away, the Government will not be able to preserve the leaves on the trees. There must be a great deal of stealthy removal yielding a very large revenue to the menial staff. I think there is some truth in the plea put forward by the Government that it is very difficult to guard these forests from being denuded

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by the trees being cut away. But if that is difficult, the difficulty of preventing leaves being stolen away must be still greater, and I think, Sir, that such a course of total prohibition only results in putting some more money in the pockets of the petty forest officials. So, Sir, it will be a much better policy for the Government to allow the ryots to take away the green leaves for manure than let loose an army of low-paid menials to prey on the country. Otherwise, I think the Government will be responsible for the corruption over which we are unable to exercise proper control. I think, therefore, that, all things considered, the policy of allowing these poor ryots to take green manure will be the proper one.

"I must also say a word with regard to the remark that fell from my hon. Friend the Mover about the attempts on the part of the Agricultural Department to popularise scientific manure. I have also heard from many people the same remark that these attempts on the part of the subordinates of the Agricultural Department to recommend scientific manure and artificial manure prepared by private firms have at bottom the idea on the part of the Government to try and secure custom for the English firms in the trade. That it is no doubt a mistaken idea I am prepared to grant. I am also anxious that these scientific manures ought to be recommended and that people should take to them in greater numbers than at present. But so long as you go on recommending scientific manure and at the same time preventing people from taking green leaves, people are likely to fall into an error of thinking that the Government want to push the sales of these scientific manures manufactured by the English firms and that to help them the Government is shutting out by all possible means the chances of people getting green manure. Green leaf manure by itself will not suffice to improve agriculture, and if you want to impress on the people the absolute necessity of improving agriculture by having recourse to scientific manure, I think it is necessary to take away this ban on green manure and at the same time recommend to them the use of those artificial manures. Therefore, Sir, in the interest of this very laudable attempt on the part of the Government in the Agricultural Department to recommend to the people to take to scientific manure, this ban on leaf manure must be removed. I therefore very strongly commend to this House the acceptance of this resolution moved by my hon. Friend, Mr. Adinarayana Chettiyar."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—"Sir, the resolution as it stands presents, to my mind, certain difficulties. The resolution says that manure leaves should be permitted to be taken free by the ryots from the reserves under the management of village forest panchayats. Now, these panchayats have been given a certain control over the forests and they are also given power to impose such terms as they may think necessary for the removal of these manures. I wish that we did nothing here to fetter their discretion in this matter. (The hon. Sir Arthur Knapp: 'Hear, hear'.) It may be that they are willing to allow the ryots to take away green leaves from the forests without any charge, or on payment of a small fee, or they regulate the supply in a particular way saying that each pattadar might have so much according to his requirements. It is for that reason I do

3 p.m. not want that this Council should lay down a specific rule that under no circumstances whatever the forest panchayats should refuse permission to ryots to remove manure leaves from these forests. So, Sir, with your permission, I would move an amendment

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for the omission of the word 'free' and for the insertion of the words 'on such conditions as they may prescribe and on a seigniorage, if any, not exceeding six annas per cart load.' In that case the resolution will read as follows :

'That this Council recommends to the Government that manure leaves be given to the ryots from the reserves under the management of village forest panchayats on such conditions as they may prescribe and at a seigniorage, if any, not exceeding six annas per cart load, and from the other forests at a seigniorage of six annas per cart load.'

"That, I think, would meet the difficulties I apprehend from a literal interpretation of the resolution."

Mr. G. RAMESWARA RAO :—"I second the amendment."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP (on being called on by the President):—"My object was, as a matter of fact, to make a suggestion which might lead to an alteration in the wording of the motion by means of an amendment and I think it is hardly worth while doing it now that an amendment has been formally moved and seconded."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—"May we here know, Sir, what the hon. Member has just spoken? We did not hear a word of what he said."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Would the hon. Sir Arthur Knapp kindly repeat what he has just now said?"

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"My remarks were addressed to you, Mr. President, and if my hon. Friend wants to hear me, it would be better if he comes to the front. My intervention at that particular moment was with a view to make a suggestion for an amendment. But as the proposal has already been seconded, I said there was no need for saying anything just at present."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I think it would probably be better if the discussion proceeded on both the resolution and the amendment. But, as usual, the House will vote on the amendment first."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—"May I be permitted to say that I accept the amendment?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"The hon. Member who moved the resolution has accepted the amendment so that the motion under consideration will be the motion as amended, which reads as follows :

'That this Council recommends to the Government that manure leaves be given to the ryots from the reserves under the management of the village forest panchayats on such conditions as they may prescribe and at a seigniorage, if any, not exceeding six annas per cart load, and from the other forests at a seigniorage of six annas per cart load.'

"The discussion will now proceed on this motion."

Rao Bahadur K. Krishnaswami Nayudu supported the motion (in Tamil).

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—"Mr. President, Sir, it seems to me that the resolution in its present amended form is least open to objection. So far as it has gone, three hon. Members have spoken in support of it and they all hail from the North Arcot district. In the course of their speeches they gave us a very graphic description of the state of things prevailing in the North Arcot district in this matter. What applies to North Arcot applies with equal force to the conditions in the South Arcot district and to other districts also similarly situated. There is much force in what the hon. Mover has said, viz., that there is no fear of the ryots denuding the

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forests. It is not at all likely that they will so far forget themselves as to embark on anything which in the long run will only work to their harm and the ryot is the last person who will dream of killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Manure leaves are largely required by the agriculturists. I am not oblivious of the fact that certain well-placed persons have their eye always on bone and guano manures and it is not possible for all classes of people to buy them. There are really numerous instances where petty landholders have to depend very largely upon green leaves for manure. To such of them this resolution will have the beneficial effect of reducing the prices by about 75 per cent. In this way it would be quite welcome to them. The present average rate is about Rs. 2 and that is a very very high price for them to pay. So far as the resolution goes, it has placed the rates at six annas in all the forests except in forests under the management of a village panchayat where it is left to them to make substantial reductions in suitable cases, which may range from zero to six annas. As my hon. Friend Mr. Krishnaswami Nayudu has told us in moving terms, these agriculturists have a lot of grievances in this matter and they are not by any means happy. It is a real justice to those people if you reduce the price and it is that that this resolution seeks to do. I do not think more words are necessary to commend the resolution to the acceptance of the House. This is not a party question and I have not the slightest doubt that, even though the Government may advance some objections, so far as the elected Members of the House are concerned, all of us will give our unanimous vote in favour of the motion."

Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"I only rise to say a few words to safeguard the concession which obtains in South Kanara not only as regards dry leaves but also as regards green leaves. The concession at present enjoyed is that they are allowed to remove green leaves as well as dry leaves without paying anything. That is the concession that has been declared openly last time during the budget debate and which has been enforced by a resolution moved by Government. The amendment which is now the substantial motion before the House fixes the maximum rate at six annas and I do not know if South Kanara will suffer thereby. I would like to state that the motion may be accepted if it will not affect the present concessions that have been made in respect of South Kanara."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"I am not quite sure of that. If my hon. Friend reads the resolution as it stands, it only recommends to the Government a charge of six annas in all forests that are not under the management of village panchayats."

Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"I consulted the hon. the Mover and he said this would not in any way prejudice any exceptional privileges that are obtaining in any other place. I would anyway suggest that a proviso be added to the effect that the acceptance of this resolution will not affect the special concessions now obtaining in South Kanara or elsewhere. I move that an amendment to that effect be made in the resolution."

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—"I second the motion."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Would the hon. Member kindly write down his amendment and pass it on to me?"

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Mr. A. CHIDAMBARA NADAR :—“In supporting the resolution, I want to say a few words. There is already a loud complaint with regard to green manure leaves and cattle grazing. The difficulty is felt all the keener in Madura district. As Mr. Adinarayana Chettiyar remarked, there is already a grumbling, and I hope the Government will take the necessary precautions to avoid such complaints, not only with regard to green manure but also with regard to cattle-grazing. With these few words, I support the motion.”

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—“Sir, may I begin by saying in all seriousness that I very much regret that the hon. Member who moved this resolution should have thought fit to introduce a suggestion that one of the reasons why Government did not encourage the extraction of green manure from our forests was that they wanted thereby to serve the interests of certain European firms selling artificial manures.”

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—“May I rise to a point of personal explanation? Already there is grumbling on the part of the ryot, rightly or wrongly, that the object of the Government in cutting off the supply of green manure is that the sales by the European firms may be increased. I simply repeated what I have heard.”

* The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—“I am very glad that my hon. Friend does not himself support the suggestion, but I cannot help saying that it would have been better if in the course of this debate so much prominence had not been given to a suggestion which has no foundation whatever in fact.”

“Now, before I proceed to the general subject, I should like to say one word about the amendment. I am afraid that the amendment does not appeal to me for the reason which the hon. the Mover of the amendment rightly pointed out, namely, that it is not desirable that Government should limit the powers of panchayats any more than is necessary. The resolution as proposed would have left the panchayats with power to charge for green manure leaves with reference to the conditions of the particular village and their financial position: the amendment proposes to limit that discretion.”

* Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—“I may also add that the special Panchayat officer induces people directly or indirectly to levy a specific fee. If we pass this motion, they need not be guided by him in this matter.”

* The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—“Government have no intention whatever of compelling panchayats to levy any specific fee. It is the business of the Panchayat officer to advise them as to what revenue is needed to carry on their operations, but nothing is further from our intention than to allow him to use any kind of compulsion. It is for that reason that I am afraid the amendment does not appeal to me.”

“I now come to the substance of the resolution as amended. In regard to the speech of the Mover, while I fully appreciate the aim which he has in view, namely, to improve the facilities for getting manure at the disposal of the ryots in his district, I think he is under some disadvantage inasmuch as he has not had an opportunity of acquainting himself with the history of this matter and with the large volume of literature on the subject which already exists. He spoke, for example, of a certain jump in the rates introduced six or seven years ago. As a matter of fact, Sir, the rates which are now in force have been in force since 1912 with only slight modifications; the

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policy of discouraging the extraction of green manures from the forests has been in force since 1912. The Government in this House are very frequently called upon to say if they have a policy in a particular matter. Sometimes we are not able to say what our policy is at the moment. But in this particular instance we are free from that charge, because we have during the last decade laid down and published a very definite policy. The latest statement of that policy is contained in the Order, dated 17th June 1921, which was laid on the Editors' Table. The position is this. In 1906 or 1907 the attention of the Government was called by the Forest Department to the damage which was being done to the forests by the almost unrestricted extraction of green manure leaves. The matter was inquired into by a committee, and, as a result of that, Government came to the conclusion that not only in the interests of the maintenance of the forests generally, but in the future interests of the ryots themselves, it was desirable that the use of green manure from forests, where that extraction was likely to damage the forests, should be discouraged. The course on which Government embarked is this.

"They took every step they possibly could to encourage the use of green manures from private lands and unreserved forests. The department of Agriculture were called in. They made experiments in a very large number of places in the Presidency. Demonstrations of the possibility of growing green manure were held. The Forest Department was itself called upon to grow seed which was made available to the ryots for the purpose of growing their own green manure. The experiment met with considerable success in some places. As a matter of fact, 13 districts in the Presidency do not use green manure from the forests. When the Mover talks about complaints of this sort being universal, I think he was not aware of that fact. My hon. Friend from South Arcot, while he dealt with the generalities of the case, is, I think, not aware that South Arcot is one of the districts which makes a very small demand on the forests for green manure for the excellent reason that they have, to a considerable extent, adopted the practice of growing green manures for themselves."

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—"It is because of the exorbitant seigniorage rate."

* The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"The fact remains that they have arranged to supply themselves with green manure grown on their own land or unreserves."

"Tinnevely is another case of the same sort. The policy therefore of the Government which was introduced in 1911 was, while recognizing that green manure was most valuable, and in some cases essential, to discourage its extraction from forests where that extraction was going to do any harm to the forests."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—"Does the hon. the Home Member think that it is possible to grow green manure on fields under precarious sources of water supply?"

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"My information is that it is possible to grow it on many kinds of fields."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—"Without water?"

* The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"There is no particular reason why certain manure crops should not be grown on dry lands. I am now however

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dealing with the question of policy. We are accused of having none. The matter continued under the close investigation of the Board of Revenue as long as the Forest administration was in their hands, and finally in 1921, as the result of representations made to the then Governor during his tours, a further investigation of the whole matter was undertaken. The very lucid report made by Mr. Cox and the Director of Agriculture, which was a result of that inquiry, was embodied in a Government Order which was laid on the table of the House. It would make matters clearer if I read to the House the two paragraphs of the order which has been published:—‘It is perfectly clear that sooner or later the ryots will have to change their customs and adapt their ways to the needs of a system of conservative cultivation. The process can only be postponed, not prevented, by allowing them to destroy the remaining forests to the last bush.’

“It follows from what has been said above that the Government accept as their ultimate aim the prohibition of leaf manure removal from the reserved forests of all districts, except parts of South Kanara and Malabar, where such removal is reported to be harmless. The Government, however, recognize that the immediate introduction of complete prohibition in all districts would cause hardship: nor is this step advised in the report. Until the realization of the ultimate aim is considered possible, seigniorage will continue to be charged at rates varying according to the local circumstances of particular districts. In the meanwhile, it will be the duty of the Agricultural Department to do all that is possible to popularize the use of green manure crops wherever wet cultivation obtains.

“That, Sir, is the policy, and my particular point is now that the Members of the House who support the resolution may, I think, fairly be called upon to contest the whole question of the policy rather than merely apply themselves to particular local needs such as the Mover brought to our notice. It may be that the policy is right or it may be wrong. But it is the declared policy, and I was in hopes that one among the members who spoke would have attacked it on the wider ground rather than merely put forward the undoubted fact that the rates of seigniorage are higher than they used formerly to be. I do not deny it. The question is whether it is a good policy to encourage people to go on using the manure leaves from the forests where it is going to do them damage or whether it is a better policy that the Government should look further forward and recognize that in course of time the ryot will have to get his manure leaves elsewhere than from those forests and should do all they can to help him to supply by other means a necessity which it will not be possible in days to come to supply from the forests.

“The objection to the removal of manure leaves applies chiefly from the point of view of Government to those forests which it is necessary to conserve in the larger interests of the Presidency. Hon. Members will remember that about the time of the Budget last year an announcement was made as to the reclassification of our forests under three heads, namely, (i) Provincial remunerative, (ii) Provincial unremunerative, and (iii) Local, i.e., ryots’ forests. Under class (ii) would fall those forests which it is necessary to retain for protective purposes or which contain valuable timber. Class (iii) forests are those which supply the ryot’s every-day needs and which the Government are prepared to hand over to Panchayat

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management, if panchayats can be formed to work them satisfactorily. Mr. Whitehead was entrusted with the duty of making this investigation. I have not yet seen his report. But when we get it orders will be passed and we shall be able to decide which areas should be declared as ryot's forests. Those areas will be handed over to panchayats, and in those areas, as far as we can see, there will be no restriction on the removal of green manure leaves.

"We are mainly concerned with the second class of forests—Provincial unremunerative. The particular issue is, as I see it, whether Government are, in the case of those forests, which *ex hypothesi* it is necessary to retain for protective purposes and which are valuable, to agree to practically unrestricted removal of green manure leaves. We unfortunately cannot accept that proposition. I doubt whether the House itself would desire us to take the risk of destroying those forests for the purpose of providing green manure which as we hold can reasonably be supplied in a great many places by another method. The case of the new class III forests, the ryots' forests, is quite different. They are areas over which it is not thought necessary, from the point of view of conservation, to maintain so close a control.

3-30 p.m. "The area over which the panchayats will operate will be very large and they will be left with large powers. They will not, I hope, be subject to the limit of six annas which the seconder proposed. My proposition therefore is that for all practical purposes the ryots, including those mentioned by the hon. Mover, will have all reasonable facilities for getting green manure. The hon. Member who seconded the resolution accused us of not having a policy, because we varied its application in different places; that charge is not justified. The policy stands, but within the limits of that policy neither I nor the forest officers have any objection to the removal of green leaves in any case where it can be shown that it will not damage the forest. There are the cases of South Kanara and Malabar where we realized that the removal of green manure from forests would not have any injurious effect on the forest and we have allowed it. But I may say at once that it is not possible to the Government to accept the general proposition which comes to this: that the removal of manure leaves is to be practically unrestricted in all the forests under its control. It is quite true that, in the Chittoor district, we recently reduced the rates and, to that extent, encouraged the removal of green manure leaves from the forests. That was the result of the Committee on Chittoor Forest Grievances which sat last year."

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Not only in Chittoor but also in Cuddapah."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP:—"Have we reduced it in Cuddapah?"

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"One year earlier than in Chittoor."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP:—"I am not quite sure why we did so (Laughter). Anyhow, I will make enquiries and see if we ought to restore it to its original level (laughter). I only referred to that matter by way of showing that if in a particular case we do not see any danger to the forest from the leaves being removed, we do not wish to penalise such removal."

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I may add that in regard to Cuddapah I find from the papers that the forests in connexion with which the question arises are likely to come under popular control and the Government will not be called upon to decide whether manure leaves should be removed or not. I doubt very much whether my hon. Friends the mover and the seconder realize that what we are discussing is really only the removal of green manure leaves from the second-class forests—those which it is desirable to retain for productive purposes or which are valuable—and that what they propose is to allow practically unrestricted removal from such forests. I say 'unrestricted' because it is apparently admitted that at six annas a cart-load there would be no limit to the demand for manure leaves from the forests. I do not think, Sir, that I need trouble the House any further. I am only anxious to make it clear first that we do not in the least ignore the great importance of green manure but that we have to set different interests against each other. We have the interest of the preservation of the forests, and we have the interest of the cultivator. What we hold in connexion with the important class of Provincial forests is that the preservation of the forests is of more importance to the community than the giving to the ryots a cheap manure. On the other hand, we are doing all we can to enable them to provide themselves with green manure from other sources to meet their needs."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR:—"I accept the amendment proposed by my hon. Friend Mr. J. A. Saldanha, to add the words 'without prejudice to any privileges now obtaining in any part of the Presidency' at the end of my motion."

* Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Sir, the question that is covered by this resolution as the hon. the Home Member said, has to be viewed from two standpoints—first, as to whether unrestricted power to remove all manure leaves available should be given in what may be called the Provincial remunerative forests and secondly, whether the present seigniorage rate of Re. 1 or Rs. 2 in some districts should be continued. So far as the question of the raising of fees is concerned, it was, as the hon. the Home Member said, only about 3 annas per cart-load before 1912. From the year 1912 onwards it was raised in various districts in various years, and I believe in 1919 it was raised to Rs. 2 in Chittoor district. The question we have now to consider is whether for leaves grown by nature and not grown as a result of any investment of capital by the Government or otherwise, the Government are justified in charging Rs. 2 instead of annas 3 which they were previously charging. Is that justifiable? Here is a forest which, in the interests of the people, the Government have taken charge of and on which they spend nothing except on the establishment. That being the case, are the Government justified in charging Rs. 2 per cart-load of green leaves? That is the point of view to which I think the hon. Member has to address himself. That is a grievance which we have been urging always. It is a case where what people were getting for 3 annas was sought to be restricted first of all by the forest officers by imposing a slightly higher fee. This process was carried on further and further with a view, it is said, of further restricting the use of leaf manure from the forests and the fee now stands at the abnormal figure of Rs. 2, which makes it out of the reach of the poor people. It is really for the purpose of helping the poor people that I

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wish the old rate of 3 annas to be restored. I am glad that the hon. Mover has not proposed going back to the original rate of 3 annas but has doubled it. Therefore, Sir, for a thing which the Government say they are maintaining in the interests of the people, they are not justified in charging anything more than 6 annas.

"As to the next point whether there should be unrestricted removal of green manure, the question comes to this. The hon. the Home Member referred to the Chittoor Forest Committee. I was one of the members of that Committee. We considered the question. I pressed and pressed very strongly before that Committee, which consisted no doubt of the forest officers to a large extent and non-officials also, that the fee should be reduced to the old rate. But, Sir, in a committee composed like that we were where we are—a minority. Practically we had by way of compromise to agree to one-rupee fees. I am glad that the Government now state that they are reconsidering it with a view to raising it to Rs. 2. We will wait and see what this process is coming to. The whole question is if in 1912 three annas was being charged and if a large number of cart-loads were being taken and if again your policy is to see that the number of cart-loads is reduced by any number whatsoever, why do you want to make revenue out of it by raising the fees to Rs. 2? Is it for the purpose of seeing that your forest income is increased so that you can have more subordinates to be let loose on the people who go to the forests for various purposes? That was the point I took up in the Committee. The Committee was satisfied—and I am sure that the Conservator who sat with me on the Committee was also satisfied—that I was right. He was an officer of the Government. He was bound by so many rules, and he knew that his superiors would take him to task if he had agreed to bring the fee lower down."

* The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"Sir, a word of personal explanation. I have already explained that the Government has viewed this matter as a matter of policy. It is not right to say that the Conservator or other district officer of North Arcot had any reason to fear that he would get into trouble if he reduced revenue by lowering the rates."

* Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU :—"There is some amount of confusion created by keeping these two things together. First of all, we should consider whether it is necessary at all that it should be raised from 3 annas to Rs. 2. It was once 3 annas, and the Government have raised it to Rs. 2. The hon. the Home Member says 'Why charge 3 annas'. I certainly say we need not charge anything, but if there is to be a charge at all there is no reason why it should be raised from 3 annas to Rs. 2. There is no reason to object to a proposal to make it 6 annas instead of what it was in 1912. There may be a restriction as to the amount of manure leaves to be removed, but the Government are not entitled to charge anything higher than 3 or 6 annas. The Government have no right to charge more. I heard the hon. the Home Member's reply. He has not said a single word as to why the removal should not be restricted to so many head-loads or cart-loads keeping the fee at 3 annas only. All that he said was that we have to restrict removal, and one of the ways by which we can do that is by charging higher fees. Human ingenuity should certainly be able to bring about restriction by a better method. I understood from the hon. the Home Member's statement that even the recommendations of the Forest

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Committee of Chittoor have been tried to be overcome. While in previous years the rate of fees was Rs. 2 the Government allowed manure leaves to be removed from a number of blocks, and since it was reduced they want to counteract the effect of that reduction by saying that manure leaves can be removed only from particular blocks. That was one of the ways by which they back out of their promise. I am sure the Government can devise methods by which they can restrict people from removing manure leaves. So long as they adopt a policy of restriction with regard to the number of cart-loads to be removed, there is no justification whatsoever for raising the fee on manure leaves from 3 annas to 2 rupees, and they cannot certainly object to the 6 annas fee now proposed which is double that of what was being collected in 1912.

"As to the broader question whether there should be any restriction at all, there seems to be a certain amount of feeling that the Government should not be allowed to have a free hand in the matter, and experience has justified this feeling. As a result of the Chittoor Forest Committee's Report, the rate was reduced from Rs. 2 to Re. 1. Though the Government accepted that recommendation, their action amounted to saying that they would charge Rs. 2 for the removal of green manure. I am sure therefore that if the rate of fee is left to the discretion merely of the Forest department, there will be any amount of difficulty. If the Government agrees to this resolution, and if a committee of this House is appointed for the carrying out of it, I am sure we will be able to arrive at a satisfactory solution from the point of view of the maintenance of the forests and from the point of view of the ryots who will be able to enjoy the benefit of a lower rate of fee.

3-45 p.m. "I say, Sir, that so far as this resolution is concerned the question of reducing the seigniorage fees is one which cannot be objected to on any ground except on the one ground that the Government are the owners of forests, and that they are therefore entitled to charge any rate they like."

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—"May I ask the hon. Member to refer me to any occasion on which the Government made a statement of that kind?"

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU :—"Sir, if it is a question of limiting the supply of manure leaves it is not necessary that you should raise the seigniorage fees on that account. If that ground, namely, the restriction of the supply of manure leaves, cannot be advanced as a sufficient ground for the raising of seigniorage fees, I fail to see what other ground the hon. the Home Member can advance.

"With regard to the suggestion that the amendment is not acceptable, so far as forest panchayat areas are concerned, I may say that in Chittoor the general grazing fee has been reduced to As. 3 while in the panchayat forest areas the old rate is still being maintained. On the one hand, you reduce the fees in the case of Government forests, while on the other hand in the case of panchayat areas, you literally force the village panchayats to charge at As. 8 even though they are quite willing to charge only at As. 6. I therefore think that this sort of maximum of As. 6 is also necessary in the case of panchayat areas because there should be some uniformity maintained in the

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case of both. If any particular panchayat wants to raise the rate, I do not think any Member of this Council will object to it. For these reasons, I support the resolution that has been moved."

The resolution as further amended was put to the House and carried.

COMMITTEE TO IMPROVE IRRIGATION FACILITIES IN THE CUDDAPAH DISTRICT.

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU :—" The resolution that stands in my name runs as follows :—

' That this Council recommends to the Government that a Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on the condition of the existing irrigation works in the Cuddapah district and the improvements that are necessary and feasible thereto and also on the possibilities of extending irrigation sources.'

" Sir, it will be necessary for me to give certain figures so far as this resolution is concerned. The area of the district is nearly 6,000 sq. miles. The population is 888,000. The revenue derived from the district is Rs. 16,87,000. The number of villages is 975. The most important of all, viz., the irrigated area from all sources, comes to nearly 150,958 acres of which the Cuddapah-Kurnool canal claims to irrigate 32,737 acres. The number of tanks, both large and small, is 1,166 besides river channels and other supply channels which go to feed these tanks.

" The next point that I would urge is that this district is notoriously in the famine zone. From the year 1875-76, when the big famine occurred, until now five famines devastated the district. In 1891, there was a very severe famine in parts of the district. In 1896-97, there was another severe famine. During the last two faslis Rayachoti taluk suffered largely from famine and even the western portion of Pulivendla taluk was affected, and, notwithstanding the theory that has been persistently advanced by the Forest department that the conservation of forests will improve rainfall, it so happens that in the Cuddapah district the greater the conservation of forests the lesser is the rainfall. The Government also wanted to improve the rainfall by imposing punitive police in some villages the forests of which were said to have been destroyed by these villagers. Notwithstanding all these efforts and theories Cuddapah is yet far behind the normal average rainfall.

" I have said something about the famine condition of the district. As regards the actual conditions of the tanks and other sources of supply, they are extremely deplorable. It so happens that none of the big officers ever visit the district. They may pass from Madras to Bellary or Anantapur but they sleep in their railway compartments when they pass through Cuddapah station. The only consolation that the people derive is that these officers pass through their station in a sleeping mood (Laughter). Out of 1,166 tanks, more than 75 per cent are in need of repairs. In the case of some tanks there is no attempt at all at repairing them. I shall give only one instance, because if I were to quote all there will be no time for all the 25 resolutions to be discussed. Lomada tank is the instance. A breach occurred in that tank some time back, and it is in a